

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA
LAKE CHARLES DIVISION**

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
COMMISSION, *et al.*,

Defendants.

No. 2:24-cv-691-DCJ-TPL

**DECLARATION OF MAUREEN K. FONTENOT IN SUPPORT OF
PLAINTIFFS' OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO DISMISS OR, IN THE
ALTERNATIVE, FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

I, Maureen K. Fontenot, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, state and declare:

1. I am over eighteen years of age and fully competent to make this declaration. I have not been convicted of a felony or crime of dishonesty.

2. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge and experience of the Society of the Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Lafayette ("Diocese"), our organization, our ministry, and our religious beliefs and practices.

3. I currently serve as the Chancellor/Director of Human Resources for the Diocese.

4. The Diocese is headquartered in Lafayette, Louisiana.

5. The Diocese employs more than 15 employees, including both men and women. Together with the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Diocese serves the Catholics and communities of southwestern Louisiana and Acadiana, where Catholics have resided since the mid-1750s. *See, e.g., The History of the Diocese of Lafayette*, Diocese of Lafayette, <https://diolaf.org/history>.

6. The Diocese follows the teachings of the Catholic Church, including the sanctity and inviolable dignity of all human life and the integrity of the marital union as procreative and unitive.

7. The Diocese operates an *Office of Pro-Life Apostolate* to communicate its message and belief in the dignity of all human life. A true and correct copy of *Office of Pro-Life Apostolate: Welcome*, Diocese of Lafayette, <https://perma.cc/7J2J-YRDQ>, is attached hereto as Exhibit 1. The Diocese is dedicated to “promot[ing] the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death.” Ex. 1 at 1. As a part of that commitment, the Office provides pregnancy resources and post-abortion healing ministries for women in need and engages in pro-life prayer and advocacy. *Id.*

8. The Diocese’s Prolife Apostolate website also makes clear that the Diocese adheres to the Church’s teaching concerning the morality of abortion. A true and correct copy of *Office of Pro-Life Apostolate: The Unborn*, Diocese of Lafayette, <https://perma.cc/7NV9-2JKD>, is attached hereto as Exhibit 2. That website “affirm[s] the moral evil of every procured abortion” as “gravely contrary to the moral law.” Ex. 2 (quoting *Catechism of the Catholic Church* § 2271).

9. The Diocese also adheres to the Church’s teachings regarding the immorality of reproductive practices such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), artificial insemination, surrogacy, contraception, and sterilization.

10. In accordance with these religious beliefs, the Diocese does not make accommodations for employees to engage in the violation of the moral teachings of the Church, including its respect for human life and marriage.

11. The Diocese does not and will not provide any workplace accommodation for an employee to obtain a direct abortion. Obtaining a direct abortion is grounds for adverse employment action, up to and including termination. The same holds true regarding the accommodation of immoral reproductive practices such as IVF, artificial insemination, surrogacy, contraception, and sterilization.

12. The Diocese will take appropriate adverse employment action against any employee who encourages another Diocesan employee to obtain a direct abortion or to request an accommodation for a direct abortion from the Diocese. The same holds true regarding immoral reproductive practices such as IVF, artificial insemination, surrogacy, contraception, and sterilization.

13. The Diocese does not and will not permit its employees to advocate in favor of abortion or abortion accommodations in the workplace or outside of it. The same holds true regarding immoral reproductive practices such as IVF, artificial insemination, surrogacy, contraception, and sterilization.

14. The Diocese will take appropriate adverse employment action against any applicant, employee, or former employee whose speech, advocacy, or conduct undermines Catholic teachings about direct abortion or to the Diocese's policies with respect to abortion. The same holds true regarding immoral reproductive practices such as IVF, artificial insemination, surrogacy, contraception, and sterilization.

15. The Diocese's expression of its beliefs would be burdened if it were required to employ individuals who undermined the teachings of the Catholic Church in the workplace, or who required Diocesan leadership to knowingly accommodate conduct or advocacy the Church believes to be gravely sinful. This is true for several reasons. For one, Scripture teaches that a house divided against itself cannot stand. *Mark 3:25*. Having the Diocese's representatives engage in conduct or advocacy opposing the core moral teachings of the Catholic Church at issue in this case—teachings that the Diocese exists to express and carry out—would harm the integrity and the religious message of the Diocese's ministry. Requiring the Diocese to accommodate conduct and advocacy contrary to its teachings and beliefs at issue in this case would also directly undermine Diocese's ministry and compromise its fidelity to fundamental Catholic principles. Together, these burdens would severely harm the Diocese's witness to the Church and to the broader world.

16. I am aware that the EEOC has issued a final rule implementing the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. *See Implementation of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act*, 89 Fed. Reg. 29096 (Apr. 19, 2024). This rule does not adequately exempt religious employers like the Diocese. I regard EEOC's rule as threatening the Diocese with penalties, lawsuits, investigations, and other burdens unless the Diocese alters its employment policies and practices regarding abortion and other reproductive practices that are described above.

17. Based on my experience with the Diocese's Human Resources practices, I conservatively estimate that it would take over 100 hours of employee time to review, analyze, and implement the accommodation requirements regarding abortion and other immoral reproductive practices contained in the Final Rule, were the Diocese to choose to take those actions. This estimate includes the time it would take for employees to speak with the Diocese's outside counsel, devise new policies, create and hold new trainings, update written materials regarding the policies, and communicate with other Diocesan employees.

18. I conservatively estimate that legal fees associated with the Diocese's consultations with outside counsel about complying with the accommodation requirements regarding abortion and other immoral reproductive practices would be over \$2,000.

19. Further, the Diocese has limited financial resources to devote to defending employment lawsuits. Any prolonged litigation resulting from the Diocese's employment policies discussed above would have a significant negative impact on the Diocese's ability to serve the surrounding Catholic community.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 12th day of November, 2024.


Maureen K. Fontenot

Exhibit 1
Diocese of Lafayette
Webpage Regarding Office of Pro-Life
Apostolate



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Office of Pro-Life Apostolate

Welcome

Our mission is to promote the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death.

"I do not hesitate to proclaim before you and before the world that all human life - from the moment of conception and through all subsequent stages—is sacred, because human life is created in the image and likeness of God."
- St. John Paul II homily
in Washington on October 7, 1979.



We Advocate For:



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PREGNANCY HELP


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Hope After Abortion


POST-ABORTION HEALING

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PRO-LIFE COORDINATORS

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CLERGY TOOLKIT

MORE



PRAYERS & WORSHIP


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MINISTRIES


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Pro-Life Marches




LOCAL

MORE



STATE

MORE



NATIONAL

MORE

Stay in Contact with the Office of Pro-Life Apostolate

Sign-Up for the Office of Pro-Life Apostolate Monthly Email Newsletter

First Name REQUIRED **Last Name** REQUIRED

Email REQUIRED

Phone Number

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Contact Us

Kelley Chapman
Director
337-261-5653
kchapman@diolaf.org

Policy for Use of Graphic Abortion Images

The Office of Pro-Life Activities has adopted a "Policy for Use of Graphic Abortion Images" which states that the office does not promote or endorse activities with indiscriminate public use of graphic images. Please read the policy in its entirety for further rationale and details.

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Calendar of Events

See a listing of events happening in
the Diocese



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LOUISIANA

1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501
337.261.5500

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Exhibit 2
Diocese of Lafayette
Webpage Regarding The Unborn



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OFFICES

[▶ A-C](#)[▶ D-M](#)[▼ O-S](#)[Ongoing Formation of Priests](#)[Pontifical Mission Societies](#)[Pro-Life Apostolate](#)[Festival de la Vie Poster Cont...](#)[Pregnancy Centers](#)[The Unborn](#)[Pro-Life Oratory Contest](#)[Post-Abortion Healing](#)[Pro-Life Coordinators](#)[Rosary Makers](#)[Pro-Life Festival](#)[Bishop's Rose Dinner](#)[Elderly and Dying](#)[Individuals with Disabilities](#)[Religious](#)[Risk Management](#)[Safe Environment](#)[Stewardship and Development](#)[▶ T-Z](#)

The Unborn

Abortion



The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law" (No. 2271).

[The Truth about Abortion & Women's Health- USCCB Fact Sheet](#)

Partial-birth Abortion

- [Partial-birth Abortion \(USCCB site\)](#)

Infanticide

- [The Doors Open to Infanticide \(USCCB site\)](#)

Adoption



Considering adoption? More information can be found at the [Adopt Baton Rouge](#) website.
<https://www.adoptccdiobr.org/>

Prayers & Resources for those on the path to adoption.
<https://www.usccb.org/adoption-resources>

Community-Based Programs
Foster Parenting & Adoption through the State of Louisiana
<https://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/page/adoption>

Intercessory Prayers: Adoption
<https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/intercessory-prayers-adoption>

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